

the first end of flexible member passes through the first access hole of the container;

a foot plate secured to an exterior of the base of the container, the foot plate including mounting holes which extend through the foot plate for mounting the device;

a retainer releasably coupled to the container for holding the spool within the container when the device is mounted in a horizontal orientation, wherein the retainer includes a locking rim which surrounds and releasably engages the rim of the container to releasably couple the retainer to the container, and wherein the retainer includes an overlapping edge which protrudes over the interior of the container to overlap a portion of the top of the spool to hold the spool within the container; and

means for rotating the spool within the container.

2. (Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein the retainer comprises a ring along the sidewall of the container overlapping a portion of the top of the spool and wherein the means for rotating the spool within the container includes a turning knob eccentrically coupled to the top of the spool within the ring.

15. (Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein the foot plate has a generally [flat] horizontal surface extending below the base of the container beyond the side wall so that force may be applied to the flat surface for stabilizing the device as the spool is rotated and when the spool is being removed from the container.

17. (Amended) A device for storing an elongate flexible member having a length, a first end and a second end, the device comprising:

a container having a base, a sidewall, and a first access hole defined by the side wall;

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a spool disposed within the container free from attachment to the container, the spool comprising:

a bottom freely resting within the container, a top having a second access hole, and a column vertically mounted between the top and bottom independent of the base, the column having a surface for winding the length of flexible member around, wherein the second end of the flexible member passes through the second access hole and wherein the first end of the flexible member passes through the first access hole of the container;

means for rotating the spool within the container; and

means for [freely] retaining the spool vertically and concentrically within the container free from attachment to the container so that the spool may be removed from the container as one piece.

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Please cancel claims 12-14. Please add claims 18-37.

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--18. A device for storing an elongate flexible member having a length, a first end and a second end, the device comprising:

a bucket having a base, a cylindrical sidewall integrally extending upward from the base, a first access hole defined by the sidewall, and a handle coupled to the sidewall for carrying the bucket so that the sidewall of the bucket is substantially upstanding;

a spool disposed within the bucket, the spool comprising:

a bottom having a round bottom plate and bearing means coupled to the bottom plate for freely resting and supporting the spool upon the base so that the spool is free from attachment within the bucket to allow the spool to be rotated within the bucket and to allow the spool to be lifted and removed from the bucket, a round top plate having a second access hole extending therethrough, and a column

vertically mounted between the round top plate and the round bottom plate independent of the base, the column having an outer surface for winding the length of flexible member around, wherein the round top plate retains the elongate flexible member concentrically around the outer surface of the column when the spool is within the bucket and when the spool is removed from the bucket and wherein the sidewall engages peripheral edges of both the round top and bottom plates of the spool to concentrically and vertically retain the spool within the bucket during rotation of the spool, wherein the second end of flexible member passes through the second access hole and wherein the first end of flexible member passes through the first access hole of the bucket; and

means for rotating the spool within the bucket to wind the flexible member around the column.

19. The device of claim 18 wherein the elongate flexible member is a cord and wherein the first and second access holes have a circumference large enough to receive the cord.

20. The device of claim 18 wherein the elongate flexible member is a wire and wherein the first and second access holes have a circumference large enough to receive the wire.

21. The device of claim 18 wherein the elongate flexible member is a hose and wherein the first and second access holes have a circumference large enough to receive the hose.

22. The device of claim 18 wherein the column further includes a cavity bounded by the outer surface extending from the outer surface to the second access hole, wherein the second end of the flexible member passes through the cavity and through the second access hole and wherein the first end of the flexible member passes through the first access hole of the bucket.

23 The device of claim ~~18~~¹⁰ wherein the means for rotating the spool within the bucket comprises:

a nut secured to the top of the spool for permitting the spool to be rotated with a nut driver.

24. The device of claim 18 wherein the bearing means comprises:
a bearing unit having a top race secured to the bottom plate, a bottom race resting upon the base of the bucket, and bearing balls therebetween.
a bearing unit between the bottom of the spool and the base of the container; and
a crank secured to the top of the spool.

25. The device of claim 24 wherein the crank is retractable.

26. The device of claim 18 wherein the first access hole of the bucket comprises: an elongate slot extending through and a substantial length of along the side wall of the bucket from near the bottom plate to near the top plate of the spool to permit the flexible member to be wound substantially around the entire outer surface of the column.

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~~27.~~ The device of claim ~~18~~¹⁰ further including compartments secured to the side wall of the bucket for holding tools.

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~~28.~~ The device of claim ~~18~~¹⁰ further including an apron secured to the bucket, the apron having pockets for holding tools.

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~~29.~~ The device of claim ~~18~~¹⁰ further including a compartment within the column for holding tools.

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~~30.~~

The device of claim ~~18~~¹⁰ further including slits within the top of the bucket for holding tools.

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The device of claim ~~18~~¹⁰ further including means for releasably securing an end of the flexible member to the bucket.

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The device of claim ~~31~~¹⁶ wherein the means for releasably securing an end of the flexible member comprise slits within the side wall of the bucket.

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~~33.~~

The device of claim 18 further including a foot plate secured to the base of the bucket, wherein the footplate has a substantially horizontal portion extending beyond the sidewall so as to permit force to be applied to the foot plate for stabilizing the bucket during rotation of the spool.

34. The device of claim 18 wherein the top plate comprises a generally flat disk and wherein the disk defines the second access hole.

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The device of claim ~~34~~²⁰ wherein the top plate further includes a brace extending across the disk.

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~~36.~~ A device for storing an elongate flexible member having a length, a first end and a second end, the device comprising:

a bucket having a base, a cylindrical sidewall and a hole extending through the sidewall;

a spool disposed within the bucket, the spool comprising:

a top plate having a top surface, a bottom surface, and a hole extending from the top surface to the bottom surface;

a bottom plate having a top surface and a bottom surface;

a tube vertically mounted between the top plate and the bottom plate independent of the base and concentric with the hole in the top plate and having one end secured to the top surface of the bottom plate and the other end secured to the bottom surface of the top plate, the tube having an outer surface for winding the length of the flexible member around and a cavity enclosed by the outer surface extending from the outer surface to the hole of the top plate;

a bearing member secured to the bottom surface of the bottom plate and freely resting upon but not attached to the base of the bucket to allow the spool to be rotated within the bucket and to allow the spool to be lifted and removed from the bucket, and

means coupled to the top plate for rotating the spool within the bucket,

wherein the sidewall engages peripheral edges of the top plate and the bottom plate of the spool to concentrically and vertically retain the spool within the bucket during rotation of the spool and wherein the first end of the flexible member passes through the hole of the bucket, the length of the flexible member winds around the outer surface of the tube and the second end of the flexible member passes through the cavity and through the hole in the top plate of the spool.

37. A device for storing an elongate flexible member having a length, a first end and second end, the device comprising:

a container having a base, a sidewall and a first access hole defined by the sidewall;

a spool disposed within the container, the spool including:

a bottom freely resting upon but not attached to the base of the container to allow the spool to be rotated within the container and to allow the spool to be lifted and removed from the container;

a top having a second access hole; and

a column vertically mounted between the top and the bottom independent of the base, the column having an outer perimeter for winding the length of flexible member around, wherein the first end of the flexible member passes through the second access hole, the length of the flexible member winds around the column and the second end of the flexible member passes through the first access hole of the container;

a footplate fixedly coupled to the base of the container, wherein the footplate includes a substantially horizontal portion which extends beyond the sidewall of the container for stabilizing the container during rotation of the spool; and

means for rotating the column within the container.

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on February 7, 1995 in which the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2 and 12-17. Claims 3-11 are presently withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 2, 15 and 17 are amended. Claims 12-14 are canceled. Claims 18-37 are added. Claims 18-37 correspond to claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-17, 19-22 and 24 in application Serial No. 08/325,552 and have been amended in response to the Examiner's rejections in that application. Claims 1, 2 and 17, as amended, overcome the Examiner's rejection. Claims 2 and 15-16 depend from independent claim 1 and also overcome the Examiner's rejection. Claims 1, 2 and 15-37 are in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal.